

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: G.

Date: July 27, 2005

Topic: First Review of a Request for Approval of an Alternative Accreditation Plan from the Hampton City Public Schools

Presenter: Mrs. Kathleen M. Smith, Director of the Office of School Improvement
Dr. Patrick J. Russo, Director of Alternative Education for Hampton City Public Schools

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Origin:

 Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

 X Board review required by
 State or federal law or regulation
 X Board of Education regulation
 Other: _____

 Action requested at this meeting Action requested at future meeting: September 21, 2005
(date)

Previous Review/Action:

 No previous board review/action

 X Previous review/action
date June 23, 2004

action Proposal presented for first review and later withdrawn

Background Information:

The *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* adopted by the Board in July 2000. Section 8 VAC 20-131.280.D. of the standards states:

Special purpose schools such as regional, special education, alternative, or career and technical schools that serve as the student's school of principal enrollment shall be evaluated on standards appropriate to the programs offered in the schools and approved by the Board prior to August 1 of the school year for which approval is requested. Any student graduating from a special purpose school with a Standard, Advanced Studies, or Modified Standard Diploma must meet the requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50.

Section 22.1-253.13:1.D.8 of the *Standards of Quality* requires local school boards to provide educational alternatives for students whose needs are not met in programs prescribed elsewhere in these standards. Such students shall be counted in average daily membership (ADM) in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Education. Regulations governing programs such as this are found in the accrediting standards, which permit alternative accreditation plans and allow the Board to grant waivers to certain provisions of the standards.

In September 2004, at the board's request, the department developed a template for school divisions to use in preparing alternative accreditation plan proposals. The department also developed criteria for the evaluation of proposals. This request has been reviewed against the evaluation criteria and a copy of the department's review is attached.

Summary of Major Elements:

The school board of Hampton City is proposing an alternative accreditation plan for Hampton Harbour Academy (HHA), an alternative charter school that serves students in grades six through eight who are at least two years behind their grade cohort group. These students have been retained more than once, some students are reading as much as four years behind their chronological age group and are equally behind in mathematics. HHA has been rated Accredited with Warning in 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05.

The intent of HHA is to provide interventions in the core academic areas in order for students to gain skills and content necessary to successfully enter high school and graduate with a standard diploma. The program of instruction will:

- focus instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics;
- offer many opportunities for hands on and high interest work and vary activities in class to keep students engaged;
- integrate curriculum from elective courses into core academics;
- provide tutoring and intensive intervention to students during the school day;
- incorporate physical education into the day with wellness activities;
- teach science and history social sciences using interdisciplinary project learning;
- provide six hours of instruction per day;
- limit class size to 10 students per class; and
- offer opportunities for career exploration.

Hampton Public Schools is requesting that the school be accredited on the following criterion: 70% of the 8th grade students in the program for a full academic year will pass the 8th grade SOL assessments in English, writing and mathematics.

Hampton Public Schools is requesting waivers to provisions of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* to allow them to implement the program of instruction as outlined above. Waivers are requested to provisions for instructional programs in middle schools as required in 8 VAC 20-131-90 A-D as follows:

- A. The middle school shall provide each student a program of instruction which corresponds to the Standards of Learning for English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. In addition, each school shall provide instruction in art, music, foreign language, physical education and health, and career and technical exploration.
- B. The middle school shall provide a minimum of eight courses to students in the eighth grade. Courses in English, mathematics, science, and history/social science shall be required. Four elective courses shall be available: level one of a foreign language, one in health and physical education, one in fine arts, and one in career and technical exploration.
- C. Level one of a foreign language shall be available to all eighth grade students. For any high school credit-bearing course taken in middle school, parents may request that grades be omitted from the student's transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course in accordance with policies adopted by the local school board. Notice of this provision must be provided to parents with a deadline and format for making such a request. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent a middle school from offering any other credit-bearing courses for graduation.
- D. To provide students a sufficient opportunity to learn, each student shall be provided 140 clock hours per year of instruction in each of the four disciplines of English, math, science, and history/social science. Sixth grade students may receive an alternative schedule of instruction provided each student receives at least 560 total clock hours of instruction in the four academic disciplines.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education accept for first review the request for approval of an alternative accreditation plan from the Hampton City Public Schools.

Impact on Resources:

There is no impact on the resources of the Department of Education.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: This item will be presented to the Board of Education for final review at its meeting on September 21, 2005.

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**

**REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF CERTAIN ACCREDITING STANDARDS
AND/OR APPROVAL OF AN INNOVATIVE OR EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM**

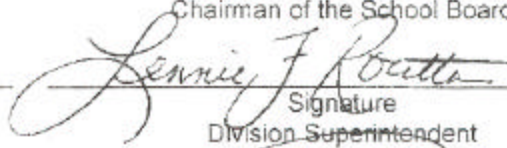

Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, (8 VAC 20-131-10 et. seq.) set the minimum standards public schools must meet to be accredited by the Board of Education. Accreditation of public schools is required by the Standards of Quality (22.1-253.13:1 et. seq.). The annual accrediting cycle for public schools is July 1 through June 30.

This cover sheet, with the supporting documentation, must be submitted to the Department of Education for review and recommendation to the Board at least 90 days prior to the beginning of an accrediting cycle or the proposed implementation of the program or activity that precipitates the request for the waiver. The types of waivers available and the corresponding section of the standards are indicated below. Please feel free to attach additional sheets or information deemed appropriate.

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| SCHOOL DIVISION | Hampton City Schools |
| TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY | Hampton Harbour Academy- An Alternative Charter School Serving Grades 6-8 |

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| _____ | Approval of an Alternative to the Standard School Year and School Day (8 VAC 20-131-150) |
| <u> X </u> | Approval of an Alternative Accreditation Plan (8 VAC 20-131-280.D) |
| _____ | Approval of an Experimental Program (8 VAC 20-131-290 D) |
| _____ | Approval of an Innovative Program (8 VAC 20-131-290 D) |
| <u> X </u> | Approval of a Waiver of Other Provision(s) of the Standards (8 VAC 20-131-330) |
| _____ | (Complete Pages 1 and 3 of the application only.) |

| | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| SCHOOL(S) INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED PROGRAM/ACTIVITY | | <u>Hampton Harbour Academy</u> |
| Date Approved by the Local School Board | Signature Chairman of the School Board | |
| <u>6/17/05</u> |  | |
| Submission Date | Signature Division Superintendent | |
| <u>6/21/05</u> |  | |
| SCHOOL DIVISION | <u>Hampton City Schools</u> | |
| TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY | <u>Hampton Harbour Academy- An Alternative Charter School Serving Grades 6-8</u> | |

IF YOU ARE SEEKING A WAIVER OF A PROVISION OR PROVISIONS OF THE ACCREDITING STANDARDS, STATE THE PROVISION AND THE RATIONAL FOR SEEKING A WAIVER FOR EACH.

8 VAC 20-131-90. Instructional Program in Middle Schools.

- A. Specifically, "In addition, each school shall provide instruction in art, music, foreign language, physical education and health, and career and technical exploration."
- B. Specifically, "The middle school shall provide a minimum of eight courses to students in the eighth grade. Four elective courses shall be available: level one of a foreign language, one in health and physical education, one in fine arts, and one in career and technical exploration."
- C. Specifically, "Level one of a foreign language shall be available to all eighth grade students."
- D. Specifically, "...each student shall be provided 140 clock hours per year of instruction in... science, and history/social science."

RATIONALE: We request waivers from the above standards due to the special purpose of the school's program and the needs of its students. The middle school program is designed for students already two or more years behind their entry grade cohort group. These students have been retained more than once and often have significant skill deficits in reading (some as much as four years behind their chronological age group) and math. Often, students who read poorly are also behind in other content-based core academic subjects. The program is designed to provide interventions in these core academics in order for students to gain the skills and content necessary to begin recovery of time lost due to retention.

- Waivers from the requirement for elective, foreign language, and physical education/health courses are sought so that instructional time can be dedicated primarily to core academics.
- While the school will not offer discreet courses in art, music and physical education and health, there is value in a well-rounded day with diverse activities for students.
- The school will incorporate physical education into the day with wellness activities such as a walking regimen with distances measured by pedometer and opportunities for recreational activities during the lunch/recess period.

- Due to the lack of discreet elective courses in the program, teachers will vary activities in class and offer many opportunities for hands-on and high interest work to keep students engaged. They will also integrate curriculum from elective courses into core academics, e.g. budgeting (from Work and Family Studies) in math, and resume writing (from Computer Applications/ Career and Technical Education) in writing.
- Science and history/social science skills will be taught using interdisciplinary project learning and selected readings in core academic classes so that students gain the content and skills necessary for success in high school.
- Students will engage in career exploration through the use of internet resources and will also take aptitude and interest inventories to be used in planning academic and vocational choices for high school.

DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WAIVER/PROGRAM/ACTIVITY. (Include information that includes measurable goals, objectives, and student academic achievement that will be expected as a result of the implementation of the program/activity)

PLEASE REFER TO ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION PLAN PROPOSAL WHICH FOLLOWS.

Number Of Students Involved In The Program

Middle School- 90 students

What is the anticipated length of the program or duration of the waiver?

September, 2005-June, 2006

HAMPTON HARBOUR ACADEMY

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| SCHOOL DIVISION | <u>Hampton City Schools</u> |
| TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY | <u>Hampton Harbour Academy- An Alternative Charter School</u> |

ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION PLAN PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

Currently in its fourth year of operation, Hampton Harbour Academy (HHA) is an alternative school in the Hampton school division converted from an alternative program to a charter school in July of 2001. Hampton Harbour Academy meets the state definition of a special purpose school and seeks approval for an alternative accreditation plan as provided in the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, Part VIII, Section 8 VAC 20-131-280 D.

INTENT

Hampton Harbour Academy exists to prepare 6th, 7th and 8th grade students who are significantly behind in basic academic skills to successfully enter high school and graduate with a standard diploma.

MISSION

Hampton Harbour Academy will provide quality educational programs to help students who may require a smaller and more supportive learning environment to be successful.

TARGET POPULATION

Hampton Harbour Academy serves middle school students who are two years or more behind their age appropriate cohort group in grade level, e.g. eighth grade students are 15 to 16 years of age and older while typical HCS eighth graders are 13 to 14 years old. Hampton Harbour students most often have skill deficits in reading and math. Standardized test scores on norm referenced tests show them to fall 20-25 percentile points lower than the general HCS student population. As a result, they have experienced school failure and an inability to catch up in the traditional middle school setting. These student characteristics have been influential in our inability to meet the SOL benchmarks to date.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

- The core program of academic instruction will be in reading, writing and mathematics. Students will also receive instruction in organization and study skills as well as ongoing assistance in goal setting and decision- making.
- Science and history/social science skills will be taught using interdisciplinary project learning and selected readings in core academic classes so that students gain the content and skills necessary for success in high school.
- The student day will be six hours in length with one half hour dedicated to lunch and recreation. After-school programs will also be developed for additional intervention and activities dependent on partnerships with other organizations, e.g. Hampton Department of Parks and Recreation.

- Class size will be limited to 10 students per class, grouped in teams of 30. Each class will be staffed with a licensed teacher with additional services provided by an instructional assistant assigned to each team.
- Elective course material will be integrated into core academics, e.g. budgeting (from Work and Family Studies) in math, and resume writing (from Computer Applications/Career and Technical Education) in writing.
- Opportunities for career exploration will be offered using internet resources and students will take aptitude and interest inventories to be used in planning academic and vocational choices for high school.
- Physical Education will be included in the student day with:
 - A 30 minute period for recess/lunch which will allow students time to walk or engage in recreational activities.
 - A walking regimen that includes the use of pedometers for students to measure distance and time spent walking. These data will be used in mathematics lessons. Calories burned will also be recorded and used to discuss wellness and health issues.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION:

Each student will be pre-tested on entry into the program using a minimum of three test batteries to assess functional skill in reading and mathematics. Based on triangulated data from these assessments, students will be grouped for instruction on gender-specific teams and an instructional plan developed. Students will be assessed for progress quarterly, with achievement data tracked and analyzed. Students will be ungraded until they reach a minimum reading level of 7.4 (7th grade, 4th month). Ungraded students will not participate for accountability purposes in any on-grade level assessments including SOL's at 6th or 7th grade.

When students reach a reading level of 7.4 (7th grade, 4th month), they will be classified as 8th graders and will participate in end-of-year SOL assessments in the core subjects of reading (RLR), writing, and mathematics. Students will be promoted to the 9th grade based on skills demonstrated in these three assessments.

ACCREDITATION

Student performance measures for accreditation will be the 8th grade end-of-year SOL tests in reading (RLR), writing and mathematics. The performance standard for accreditation will be a 70% pass rate for 8th grade students in the program.

WAIVERS REQUESTED

This intervention program for middle school students will need waivers from the state standards requiring a minimum of eight courses for 8th graders to include electives and physical education as well as the requirement for 140 hours of instruction in science and history/social science.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The efficacy of the instructional program will be evaluated using:

- The progress of the school in meeting accreditation requirements
- The percentage of entering students who successfully progress to the 9th grade
- The percentage of entering students who successfully progress from ungraded to 8th grade status
- The educational gain of students from pre to post test on assessments in reading and mathematics

- The improvement in student attendance rates
- Qualitative evidence of improvement in student attitudes towards school and learning

**Virginia Department of Education
Evaluation Criteria
Hampton Harbour Academy, Hampton City Public Schools
Alternative Accreditation Plans for Special Purpose Schools
(8 VAC 20-131-330)**

| Criteria | Yes | No | Limited |
|---|------------|-----------|----------------|
| School characteristics and instructional program: | | | |
| 1. The mission, purpose, and target population of the school justify its categorization as a “special purpose” school and, therefore, eligible to request an alternative accreditation plan. | X | | |
| 2. The characteristics and special needs of the student population are clearly defined, and the criteria for student placement require parental consultation and agreement. | X | | |
| 3. The program of instruction provides all students with opportunities to study a comprehensive curriculum that is customized to support the mission of the school and the student population’s success in achieving the Standards of Learning. | X | | |
| 4. The school provides transition planning to help students be successful when they return to a regular school setting. | | | X |
| 5. Strategies used to evaluate student progress are aligned to the mission/purpose of the school and include standards-based academic achievement measures. | X | | |
| 6. Convincing evidence has been provided that students who are enrolled in the school have not been successful in other schools subject to all the accrediting standards. | X | | |
| 7. Students will be taught by highly qualified teachers who meet the Board of Education’s licensure requirements for instructional personnel. | | X | |
| Alternative Accreditation Accountability Criteria: | | | |
| 1. Rationale and documentation provide convincing evidence that the “special purpose” nature of the school precludes its being able to reach and maintain full accreditation status as defined in the <i>Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia</i> (SOA). | X | | |
| 2. Alternative accreditation criteria described in the plan include academic achievement measures that are objective, measurable, and directly related to the mission and purpose of the school. | | | X |

| Criteria | Yes | No | Limited |
|---|------------|-----------|----------------|
| 3. The plan includes use of statewide assessment student achievement results of English and mathematics. | | | X |
| 4. The plan meets the testing requirements of the SOA. | | | X |
| 5. The plan meets the testing requirements of NCLB and describes how the school plans to meet “adequate yearly progress” requirements of the federal law. | | | X |
| 6. The plan provides convincing evidence that all pre-accreditation eligibility criteria are met for standards in which waivers have not been requested. | X | | |
| 7. Waivers have been requested for accrediting standards that are not being met, and the rationale for the waivers are clear and appropriate for the mission/purpose of the school. | | | X |